

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 SAM-01 /088 W

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R 040248Z MAR 76

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5236

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

ACMONSUL HONG KONG 3102

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0369

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IN VYN

SUBJECT: SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS: INDIAN STATUS REPORT

REF: NEW DELHI 3001 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: INDIAN CHARGE MEHROTRA HAS SUBSTANTIALLY
CONFIRMED POSITIVE TURN IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS
EMBODIED IN HIS NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION CONVERSATION
(JAN 26) WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HAN NIEN-LUNG.
HE DID NOT VERIFY, HOWEVER, SOME DETAILS OF REFTEL
REPORT. END SUMMARY

1. MEHROTRA, IN LUNCHEON CONVERSATION MARCH 3, TOLD
ACTING CHIEF THAT HIS CONVERSATION WITH HAN, WHICH,
IN TRADITIONAL FORMET HERE, TOOK PLACE AS THEY SAT
TOGETHER DURING ONE HOUR'S RECEPTION, WAS MARKEDLY
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MORE COURTEOUS THAN THAT AT 1975 RECEPTION. AT LAST

YEAR'S RECEPTION, MEHROTA SAID, HE AND HAN SPENT FULL HOUR EXCHANGING CHARGES AND COMPLAINTS IN AN UNPLEASANT TIT-FOR-TAT DIALOGUE. THIS YEAR, HE SAID, THERE WAS TOTAL ABSENCE OF UNPLEASANT COMMENT, INCLUDING ABSENCE OF ANY REFERENCE TO SIKKIM. MEHROTRA SAID THAT HAN, WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC, OFFERED EXPECTATION THAT SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE IN DUE COURSE.

2. MEHROTRA WENT ON TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT CHINESE RHETORICAL EXPLOITATION OF BANGLADESH-INDIAN PROBLEMS HAS CONTINUED IN NCNA AND HE REGISTERED PUZZLEMENT AS TO EXACTLY WHAT CONTRIBUTION CHINESE WILL MAKE TO IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS. REGARDING QUESTION OF EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS, MEHROTRA SAID THERE WERE NO PLANS NOW TO SEND AN AMBASSADOR AND IMPLIED THAT THIS TOPIC HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED RECENTLY. HE MENTIONED ONLY THAT, IN CONCRETE DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE MANY MONTHS AGO, CHINESE SIMPLY LEFT IT THAT THE INDIANS WERE FREE TO SEND AN AMBASSADOR AT ANY TIME BUT WOULD HAVE TO DO SO UNCONDITIONALLY, SPECIFICALLY WITHOUT ANY PROMISE THAT CHINESE WOULD RECIPROCATE. WE INFER FROM THIS THAT EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS IS NOT NOW A LIVE ISSUE.

3. AT THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION, HAN, MUCH TO MEHROTRA'S GRATIFICATION, STRESSED CHINESE APPRECIATION FOR MME. GHANDI'S HAVING PERSONALLY SIGNED THE CONDOLENCE BOOK.

4. COMMENT: MEHROTRA, DURING VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS IN LATTER HALF OF LAST YEAR, CONSISTENTLY DISPLAYED IRRITATION, DISDAIN AND VIRTUAL HOPELESSNESS ABOUT FINDING A WAY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH PRC AND ABOUT CHINESE INTENTIONS. TONE OF MEHROTRA'S MARCH 3 DISCUSSION OF CHINESE RELATIONS WAS VERY DIFFERENT, WHILE STILL REFLECTING SOME IRRITATION AT CHINESE FAILURE TO BE "REASONABLE" TOWARD NEW DELHI AND SOME SADNESS THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE NO EASY FORMULA TO SORT OUT THEIR RELATIONS, HE WAS VERY MUCH CALMER AND IMPLICITLY MUCH MORE HOPEFUL ABOUT
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THE FUTURE. AS FAR AS WE COULD TELL, HOWEVER, MEHROTRA DOES NOT HAVE ANY IDEA OF TIMETABLE FOR BRINGING RELATIONS BACK TO THE POINT, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE AMBASSADORS MIGHT BE EXCHANGED.
THAYER

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